

REMARKS

Claims 18-25 and 28-33 remain pending in this application. Claims 18-25 and 28-33 define an invention that is novel and unobvious over the cited references. Favorable reconsideration of this case is respectfully requested.

Claims 18-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention, the Examiner noting that:

What is being suggested by the second paragraph of claim 18 is unclear. Moreover, what is meant by "self node device" is not clear. Note also what is being suggested by "cut-through optical path ... " (see claim 19 for example) is unclear.

Regarding claim 27, the claim depends on cancelled claim 4.

As to claim 28, the claim is unclear with respect to the method steps. Note lines 6-12 for example. Applicant is requested to clarify the claims.

Applicant respectfully submits that the foregoing amendment removes all grounds for this rejection. Accordingly, the remaining claims are now deemed to be in allowable form.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

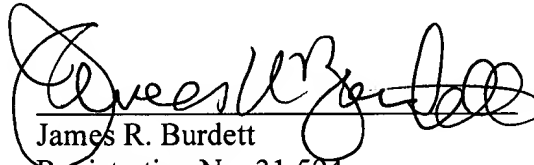
Applicant respectfully submits that the prosecution of this application would be advanced by a personal interview. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

U.S. Application No. 09/612,304
Reply to Office Action dated November 13, 2003

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee necessitated by this
Amendment to our Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Respectfully submitted,

4/28/04
Date



James R. Burdett
Registration No. 31,594
VENABLE
P.O. Box 34385
Washington, D.C. 20043-9998
Telephone: (202) 344-4800
Facsimile : (202) 344-8300

JRB/lrh
DC2/523183